THE BLACK CAT COLLECTIVE

N.J.D.C. P.O. Box 3234 East Orange, N.J. 07019

T/SOR/4/9/5/2/13

THANKSGIVING? HOW CAN WE IGNORE WHAT IT REPRESENTS?

SUGGESTIONS:
We realize that many of us are given this day off and it is convenient to use this time for coming together. However, we should consider alternative dates for observing our thanks-giving and redefine it for ourselves.

IF WE CHOOSE TO SPEND THIS DAY WITH OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, AT LEAST REMIND EACH OTHER OF THE TRUE HISTORY AND HOW IT CONNECTS WITH OUR PRESENT REALITY.

FAST IN PROTEST OF OUR PEOPLE'S COOPERATION WITH OUR OWN GENOCIDE

AFRICAN PEOPLE IN AMERICA ARE VICTIMS OF THE SAME PROCESS THAT RESULTED IN THE MURDER OF MILLIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS. AMERICA WAS BUILT BY STOLEN LABOR ON STOLEN LAND!

DON'T FEAST ON THANKSGIVING THURSDAY!

IN THE YEAR 1620, ENGLISH SETTLERS LANDED AT PLYMOUTH, MASS. THEY, UNPREPARED FOR SURVIVAL, BECAME DEPENDENT ON THE GOODWILL OF THE NATIVE PEOPLE WHO TAUGHT THEM THE BASICS. A DAY OF THANKSGIVING WAS PROCLAIMED TO CELEBRATE THEIR FIRST HARVEST. MORE EUROPEANS KEPT COMING. THIS DISPLACED THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS, LEADING TO WARFARE. THE NATIVE CONFEDERATION OF THAT AREA WAS EXTERMINATED: THEIR CHIEF KILLED, HIS HEAD PUBLICLY DISPLAYED FOR 20 YEARS; THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN SOLD INTO SLAVERY. THIS IS THE LEGACY OF THANKSGIVING!!! "THE EUROPEAN-COLONIZATION-ENSLAVEMENT-EXPANSION PROCESS." REMEMBER THE MILLIONS OF US SLAUGHTERED IN THE RAPE OF AFRICA FOR OUR HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES; THE BLACK LIVES LOST IN THE ATLANTIC; THE COUNTLESS MUTILATIONS AND MASSACRES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. THE PROCESS HAS NOT STOPPED. IT CAN BE SEEN IN THE POOR CONDITION OF LIFE RIGHT HERE IN THE BLACK/LATINO COMMUNITY. IT IS FELT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

A TRIBUTE TO THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF NATIVE AMERICAN & AFRICAN PEOPLE

T/SOR/49/5/2/B

THE BLACK CAT COLLECTIVE

Presents

BLACK AUGUST

GEORGE and JONATHAN JACKSON

(A Commemoration)

BLOOD IN MY EYE

Guest Speakers

Bonnie Kerness
(American Friends Service Comm.)

Representative
(Black Panther Newspaper Comm.)

Representative
(Paterson Anarchist Collective)

Representative
(Black Cat Collective)

Where: Newark Public Library
5 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey

When: September, 12 1995

Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm

FILM

On political prisoners

BLACK CAT COLLECTIVE - P.O. BOX 1191 Newark, New Jersey 07101-1191

T/SQR/49 5/2/13

When George Jackson's letters were first released in 1969, they brought a young revolutionary to the forefront of international consciousness. It was a time when dissatisfaction with the status quo was being expressed by the Black Power movement, the anti-war movement, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, the American Indian movement and the Civil Rights movement. Those movements spoke for the disenfranchised, the poor, the victimized, the imprisoned and the enraged. George spoke in a revolutionary voice that stunned the world. He was a prominent figure of radical thought, and young Jonathan was perhaps the most modern day figure of revolutionary practice. The assassination of George and his brother, who was killed in action, figured prominently in the rebellions at Attica, Rahway and dozens of other prisons across the country, and in the death of the radical movement of that time. One of the results of those times, those movements and those courageous opposition leaders is a backlash which we are still feeling.

In the re-issue of Soledad Brothers, Jonathan Jackson, Jr. eloquently notes that "George Jackson cannot and will not ever leave. His life and thoughts serve as the message....." Jonathan Jr. also says that nothing is more dangerous to a system that depends on misinformation, than a voice that obeys its own dictates and has the courage to speak out. George Jackson's imprisonment and further isolation within the prison system were clearly a function of the state's response to his outspoken opposition to the capitalist structure". Jonathan also states that political incarceration is a tangible form of state control.

Any commemoration of George and Jonathan is both a very personal as well as a political thing. From Jonathan I learned the vast difference between a progressive action and a revolutionary one, and from George I learned, among other things, that awareness compels me to battle the walls of silence that the government tries to build around our current political prisoners, prisoners of war and politically conscious social prisoners. From each of them, I learned the importance of honoring my commitments with everything in my power. Black August of each year has become a time for me to mourn the loss of two extraordinary human beings that rocked the world, and a time of celebration of their very existence and the considerable legacy and responsibility that they left us.

When young Jonathan Jr. talks about George's "further isolation" within the prison system, he is talking about the control unit in which George was kept. George's control unit was, like others of today, a sensory deprivation cage which kept him apart from the rest of the prison population. The prison administrators did that then and they do it today for political purposes. They don't want any Afrocentric, or culturally or politically militant teaching going on in US prisons.

As we sit here, perhaps ten percent of the million and a half people in the prison system in this country are living in permanent isolation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year after year in a cage designed for their mental and physical destruction. In a letter from one of these brothers, he asks "how does one go about articulating desperation to another who is not desperate. How does one go about articulating the psychological stress of knowing that people are waiting for me to self destruct....." He and others living in those isolation cells called control units are living in a world where psychological and physical brutality of savage proportion reigns. The horror stories of what happens behind these walls of silence are endless - and it goes without saying that those enduring the torture are those who have been unafraid to make their understanding of the genocide and the oppression of people of color very clear. It is also clear that the white supremacists who are the

T/SOR/49/5/2/13

administrators of the prisons and the guards will not stop unless they are given reason to.

Over the 19 years that I've been working as a human rights advocate for US prisoners, I've gotten to know many of the men and women held in control units throughout the country. I've been profoundly affected by their courage, their loyalty to their principles and love of their people. I am convinced that it is through the use of this racist practice that the forces for change in this country have been enormously diminished. Many of the men and women living in these isolation units are visionaries who the government has attempted to silence. They experience the low intensity warfare that goes on in prisons every day. They write of being entombed in steel and concrete, they talk of the eerie silence, of the boredom, of being street sick. They write of the endlessness of the days and nights in these units. They write of being placed in the control units for who they are and what they believe.....none of them have committed any infractions. They are told that this is not a punishment.

The United States keeps over 5 million people under some form of social control. It imprisons over one and a half million people who are mostly people of color. Aside from the mandatory minimums which state and federal legislatures are passing to increase this population, the Federal laws being passed under anti-terrorist provisions can make even gatherings such as this suspect, and therefore open to governmental control. There is a great need for us to keep in our consciousness the issues involved in the continued growth of prisons, control units and anti-terrorist laws. Abandoning the precious resource of human beings enduring this kind of imprisonment is to contribute silently to the ethical bankruptcy of the racists who control the existence and practice of such things.

The growing political use of passing laws, using police, the courts and the prisons to oppress and suppress opposition activity is more prevalent right now than it has been since the 1950's. I can think of no better way to honor and commemorate George and Jonathan Jackson than to take to our hearts George's plea.

He says, "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution. Pass on the torch. Join us....."

About the only thing I can add to George's words of wisdom is that there is so much to be done.

Thank you.